



Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7355th meeting

 Tuesday, 6 January 2015, 3 p.m.
 New York

President: Mr. Barros Melet (Chile)

<i>Members:</i>	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Mrs. Jakubonė
	Malaysia	Mr. Haniff
	New Zealand	Mr. McLay
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . .	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Moncada

Agenda

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/943)

 Letter dated 23 December 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the
 President of the Security Council (S/2014/944)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Expression of welcome to new members and of thanks to outgoing members of the Council

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first formal meeting of the Security Council this year, I should like to extend my best wishes on the occasion of the New Year to all members of the Security Council, the United Nations and the Secretariat.

In presiding over this first formal meeting of the Council in 2015, I am happy to welcome the new members, namely, Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We look forward to their contributions to the work of the Council. Their experience and wisdom will be of invaluable assistance in the discharge of the Council's responsibilities.

I also take this opportunity to express the Council's gratitude to the outgoing members — Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda — for their important contributions to the work of the Council during their terms in 2013 and 2014.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Mahamat Zene Cherif, Permanent Representative of Chad, for his service as President of the Council for the month of December 2014. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Cherif and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/943)

Letter dated 23 December 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/944)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/943, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali, as well as to document S/2014/944, a letter dated 23 December 2014 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ladsous.

Mr. Ladsous (*spoke in French*): Now that the Malian parties will be meeting again, most likely at the very beginning of February, in order to sign off on the draft peace proposal that was circulated to them in November, I think we can say that the Malian peace process is at a critical stage. This a time, it must be said again, when the security situation in northern Mali remains extremely volatile and worrying, creating continued challenges to restoring the State in the area, to human rights, to humanitarian access and to development programmes.

The Secretary-General's report (S/2014/943), to which the President referred, gives a great deal of information on all those problems, as well as on the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and the action that has been taken to strengthen the Mission's capacity to operate in viable security conditions in northern Mali, where once again the threats to Mission personnel remain very serious. Today I would like to focus on the peace process, particularly the developments that have occurred during the period covered by the Secretary-General's report, from 16 September to 16 December.

As the report states, the progress made in the peace process since the last time the Council was briefed, in October (see S/PV.7274), has been relatively modest. The parties did indeed meet in Algiers to conduct new negotiations, which for the first time included direct discussions between the armed groups and

the Government. The mediation, led, as the Council knows, by Algeria, circulated a draft peace agreement in November, and the parties are currently reviewing it. As I said, it is based on that that a new meeting is supposed to be held, most likely at the very beginning of February. The three weeks since 16 December, the end of the period covered by the report, have featured serious clashes on the ground. I would like to take this opportunity to offer my condolences to the people and the Government of Mali, since, as the Council has heard, yesterday, 5 January, some unidentified assailants attacked the Malian army garrison in Nampala, in the Ségou region, very close to the Mauritanian border, resulting, regrettably, in about a dozen victims. We are still waiting for exact numbers.

A few days earlier, on 29 December, fighting broke out in the Bamba area, fairly close to Gao, between militia from the Groupe d'autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés and the Coordination of the Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad. The net result was three dead and five wounded. The situation on the ground remains tense, with all the parties threatening to escalate military action. MINUSMA had troops deployed in the Ber, Zarho and Bamba sectors and intervened with both sides in order to try to reduce tensions.

More generally, during this period MINUSMA increased its efforts to render the ceasefire mechanisms operational. To that end, the first meeting of the expanded Mixed Technical Commission on Security was held in Gao on 16 December. In that context, the Government and the armed groups agreed, first, that from then on the Commission would meet on the fifteenth of each month, and then that the Timbuktu joint observation and verification team would be operationalized on 10 January, as would the Kidal team on 16 January. In the past few days, a first joint team arrived in Timbuktu on 2 January to conduct an inquiry into the incidents I just mentioned in the Ber, Zarho and Bamba areas.

Bearing that in mind, I believe it is more important than ever that we appeal to all the parties to end all these violations of the ceasefire and show good faith both on the ground in Mali and at the negotiation table in Algiers. We can certainly expect that the negotiations will take a little more time, since it must be said that direct interaction between the parties has so far been limited, and some of them have yet to move from the positions they held at the start, although that does not apply to all. Therefore, what we are asking is that

they demonstrate a spirit of decisiveness, leadership and willingness to compromise in order to reach an agreement.

We know the crisis in Mali is complex and deep-rooted. Inter-community tensions and weak governance have created fertile ground for terrorism and transnational crime to develop. It is clear that if a lasting agreement is to be reached, those underlying causes must be dealt with. During the past 50 or 60 years the crisis in Mali has gone through various stages, including several negotiation phases, but none of them have really addressed the underlying causes. And we do not want the same causes to produce the same effects in future. I think the difference between this stage of the crisis in Mali and previous ones is that for the first time the international community, with the United Nations at the forefront, is directly involved and actively engaged. We must try not to repeat past mistakes.

What is at stake here is re-establishing the Malian State in every aspect and coming up with lasting solutions. For that we need courage, determination and vision. We should not, by the way, ignore the fact that reaching an agreement in Algiers is only a first step, and while it is necessary, afterwards each delegation will need time to explain and "sell" the terms of the agreement to its members. The peace agreement will also have to include detailed arrangements for its implementation, since that is what will determine the credibility of the process and MINUSMA's capacity to do everything necessary to support the implementation. Again, I think the ball is in the parties' court. It is up to them to show genuine political will and leadership. The international community supports the Malian parties, but it cannot stand in for them.

I would like to say one more thing about the security environment, which continues to be extremely difficult and costly for our forces. In the past few days we have seen our Blue Helmets attacked almost daily, with rocket attacks on MINUSMA's bases, and often on bases that also belong to Operation Barkhane. There have been targeted attacks using improvised explosive devices, between 29 December and 1 January, for example. No fewer than 20 rockets were launched against the Tessalit base. There was an improvised explosive device attack on a convoy in the Gao region on Sunday 4 January, resulting in four Blue Helmets wounded. I repeat, the cost is high, and this is an opportunity to recognize and express our admiration and sadness to the troops, the police and their contributing countries.

Since 1 July 2013 we have suffered a total of 33 dead and 109 wounded. No other mission in this era has seen so much bloodshed.

In order to be able to continue operating in what remains a very complex environment characterized by the presence of terrorists and criminals, we have continued to develop ambitious plans for construction and for action against mines and explosives — efforts that I believe are unprecedented given the scale of the threat. The implementation of all of that will take some time. We are doing everything possible with the resources we have, but it will not happen overnight.

I shall conclude my remarks here and refer Council members to the report of Secretary-General for updates on a number of aspects that I have not gone into.

Allow me to thank all partners of the United Nations involved in the mediation, led by Algeria, including the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and all other countries participating actively in the process. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank former Special Representative Bert Koenders, Deputy Special Representatives David Gressly and Arnauld Akodjénou, and the Special Representative-designate, Minister Hamdi, who is also present here today and whom I wish the greatest of success in his role. I would also like to express my gratitude to the former Force Commander, General Kazura, who the Council will recall left his functions in December. We are in the process of selecting a new Force Commander, but for the moment General Bikimo of Chad has taken over command of the force. He led the meeting of the Joint Technical Security Commission. I express my gratitude and admiration to him for his work.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I think Mr. Ladsous for his briefing

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mali.

Mr. Diop (Mali) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to express Mali's satisfaction at seeing your country, Chile, preside over the work of the Security Council during the month of January 2015.

Let me also to congratulate Chad for its outstanding leadership of the Security Council's work last month, in particular for holding an open debate on terrorism and cross-border crime (see S/PV.7351), which was presided over by my counterpart and friend, Minister Moussa

Faki Mahamat. I would also like to thank Ambassador Cherif, who is present here today.

Allow me, as well, to reiterate my delegation's congratulations to Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain and Venezuela upon taking their seats in the Security Council this year. I also convey our best wishes for the new year to all Member States. We express our sincere thanks to Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, the Republic of Korea and Rwanda for the work they achieved during their tenure on the Council.

Finally, allow me to acknowledge Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for the briefing he has just given us on the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2014/943).

Through me, the Government of the Republic of Mali thanks Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report. I would like to make the following remarks.

The first concerns the security situation. The Government of the Republic Mali notes that the report of the Secretary-General comes at a time marked by a significant increase in terrorist attacks in northern Mali. As underscored in the report, the security situation in the north of my country remains unstable and worrisome. I recall that, when I addressed the Council on 8 October 2014 (see S/PV.7274), I drew the attention of the international community to the proliferation of acts of terrorist targeting the Malian defence and security forces, civilian populations and the forces of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

Since then, acts of terrorism, including the laying of improvised explosive devices on main roads, shell and rocket attacks on Malian armed forces camps and MINUSMA bases, and suicide attacks, have intensified, unfortunately claiming the lives of Blue Helmets, soldiers of the Malian army and numerous civilians. During the period covered by the report, as was just mentioned, a total of 16 peacekeepers lost their lives to such attacks. Furthermore, the reporting period saw a whole slew of new attacks, committed not only by terrorist groups but also by forces hostile to peace. Those included the attack against the joint MINUSMA camp in Tessalit on 29 December 2014, for which the Ansar Eddine terrorist group, which is on the list of the Council's Sanctions Committee, has claimed responsibility. On the night of 29 and 30 December, hostile forces attacked a ship of the Malian Shipping

Company between Bamba and Timbuktu. On 3 January 2015, an ambush left Mayor Aroudeiny Ag Hamatou of Anderaboukane in Menaka — a Tuareg politician who was deeply committed to the ongoing peace process — shot dead. On 4 January, a car bomb targeting peacekeepers in the Gao area injured several troops of the Nigerian contingent, to whom we express our heartfelt condolences. They also include an attack committed just yesterday, 5 January, by unidentified assailants against the town of Nampala in the Ségou region, just 500 kilometres from Bamako, which claimed a number of lives and posed a further challenge not only to the Government of Mali but also to the Security Council and the international community.

Those various attacks clearly show the determination of the terrorist groups and hostile forces to impede the peace process under way, which should be a call to all of us. For its part, the Government of the Republic of Mali, views those terrorist attacks as a blatant violation of the ceasefire agreements, the road map signed in Algiers and the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter VII of Charter of the United Nations.

I must recall here the need for the armed groups operating in northern Mali to set themselves apart decisively from terrorist groups. MINUSMA forces on the ground can attest to undesirable links between certain parties and terrorist groups. That must stop. We cannot accept such attitudes. A clear choice must be taken between the peace process and other actions. We must avail ourselves of the means to undertake adequate verification and make determinations in that regard.

I also recall that, in my statement of 8 October, faced with the resurgence of terrorist attacks that have clearly demonstrated that MINUSMA was, unfortunately, no longer working in a peacekeeping environment, as my friend Mr. Hervé Ladsous already stated a few weeks ago, I proposed the establishment of a force intervention brigade, along the lines of the brigade of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, by contributing countries for deployment in northern Mali with robust rules of engagement and means to combat terrorist groups and drug-traffickers.

Furthermore, with a view to addressing the emergency, a ministerial meeting of the African countries contributing troops to MINUSMA was held on 5 November 2014 at Niamey at the initiative of my counterpart, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the

Niger, Mr. Mohamed Bazoum. Among other things, the meeting requested sped-up consideration of the establishment of a quick reaction force for northern Mali as part of the Nouakchott Process on enhancing security cooperation and operationalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region, in order to make comprehensive recommendations to the African Union Peace and Security Council.

The Niamey ministerial meeting thus also echoed Security Council resolutions on the importance of an early conclusion to the inter-Malian talks taking place in Algiers, noting that the conclusion of an agreement between the Government of Mali and northern armed movements would promote a more effective fight against terrorist and criminal groups operating in the northern part of our country. The findings of the Niamey ministerial meeting were forwarded to the Security Council in view of the brainstorming session on MINUSMA held here on 10 November 2014, which I would like to congratulate the Secretariat team for having initiated. The Government of Mali welcomes the measures to strengthen MINUSMA advocated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 65 of his report and looks forward to the follow-up measures that the Security Council may wish to take following the conclusion of the ministerial meeting in Niamey.

My second comment is about the political process, to which Under-Secretary-General Ladsous also referred, in particular the inter-Malian talks being held in Algiers. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General reviews in a timely manner the peace talks taking place in Algiers between the Government and the armed movements and groups in northern Mali under the auspices of the international mediation led by Algeria.

In my capacity as head of the Government delegation to this process, I would like to reiterate to the Council the personal commitment of His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of Mali, to reaching a final and comprehensive peace agreement with our brothers and sisters in the armed movements from the north of the country, and to consider together a reworking of the Malian State, which, as the Under-Secretary-General indicated, would reassure all Malians. That must be undertaken with the understanding that the solution that we seek for the north must be built on a national consensus that is acceptable to all Malians and that political and institutional frameworks are created to encourage all Malians to live out their diversity in the framework of the established principles and

constitutional rules, so that no Malian feels like a foreigner in their own country.

In his message to the nation on 31 December 2014, the President reaffirmed his determination to resolve the question of northern Mali through dialogue. In that context, the President remains convinced that decentralization, within the framework of the free administration of communities, within a unitary State, is the cornerstone of the inclusive inter-Malian talks under way in Algiers. The offer of decentralization and of the free administration of communities through a significant transfer of prerogatives is sincere. It will also be a comprehensive offer. It is the best response to the legitimate demands of our citizens, whether from the north or the south, who all aspire to well-being and therefore want a say in resources, local institutions and the manner in which their affairs are managed at the local level.

At the same time, the President committed, in his message to the nation, to taking all necessary steps to ensure a diligent and full implementation of the future peace agreement commitments, drawing all possible lessons from preceding agreements. By opening their arms to all those who want to lay down their weapons, the President recalled that his primary objectives are still peace, stability, territorial integrity, social cohesion, justice, equity, the inclusion of all without distinction — and I would highlight that element — and national reconciliation. It is understood that the republican, unitary and secular nature of the State of Mali are and remain non-negotiable.

My third point concerns compliance with commitments. The Government of Mali has consistently honoured its commitments in the peace process that is under way. Since the signing of the ceasefire agreement of 23 May 2014, Mali's defence and security forces have not committed any act likely to be interpreted as a violation that threatens to overshadow the political process. Of course, we cannot say as much of the other signatories to the 24 July 2014 declaration of the cessation of hostilities.

Furthermore, the constant emergence of armed groups in spaces unoccupied by the national defence and security forces, in order to attack and commit violations against certain communities largely explains why vigilante groups have been formed by the communities concerned in order to protect their land. In that respect, I take this opportunity to emphasize strongly that these self-defence community groups, described in the

report of the Secretary-General as pro-Government, are neither founded nor supported by the Government of Mali. Beyond the fact that some of the allegations in the report should be subject to verification, I would like to reiterate the commitment by the Government of Mali to meet its human rights commitments, which amply justify continuing the investigations under way.

Let me now share with the Security Council the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Heads of State and Government of the Nouakchott Process, which includes all 11 countries of the Sahel, and the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Five Sahel (G-5), which includes 5 countries of the Sahel region, who met, respectively, on 15 December 2014 in Accra, from 17 to 18 December in Nouakchott and on 19 December 2014 in Nouakchott. I would like to recall here those decisions.

First, the Heads of State of those various organizations reiterated their commitment to Mali's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the unitary character — and I would repeat, the unitary character — and republican form of its State. The Heads of State also reiterated their call on all armed groups in northern Mali that are signatories of the Ouagadougou preliminary agreement of 18 June 2013, to differentiate themselves from terrorist groups, as I mentioned. They welcomed the results achieved since July 2014 by the inter-Malian open peace talks held in Algiers with the support of international mediation led by Algeria and urged the Malian parties, including the Government, to conclude a peace agreement when the talks held in Algiers are resumed in January 2015. We will probably see that timetable extended into February in order to reach a compromise on the basis of the draft agreement submitted to the parties.

On the eve of the resumption of talks in Algiers, I would like to appeal to the Security Council members who are able to do so to exert the necessary pressure to cause the leaders of the armed movements to become personally involved in the process when the talks resume. That is a crucial point.

During the negotiations held in Algiers, we could have achieved a breakthrough, because the draft agreement that we had before us, which was partly based on the offer made by the Government of Mali, is a good document and forms a sound basis for further discussions. It deals with most of the questions that need to be tackled with respect to the four main

elements of negotiation. We also had the opportunity in Algiers to interact with our brothers. The problem here, of course, was that the leaders of these movements were not present. I believe that the international community needs to be firm on such issues.

It is incomprehensible that, when the Government of Mali decided to send five ministers — with me, your humble servant, at the head of the delegation — our brothers from the movements could not find the time to come to the negotiating table. At a time when the international community has invested and sacrificed so much in terms of human and material resources and energy to put in place the mediation, so that together we could overcome the obstacles facing us, those leaders did not attend.

Today only a handful of mostly political issues remain that can be resolved only at the highest possible political level. That is why we hope that with respect to the session, which is going to resume at the end of this month or perhaps early in February, the most important thing is not to move with undue haste towards the convening of a meeting but to ensure that commitments are made by all the parties at the highest possible level. This is of fundamental importance. We stand ready to do so, because we feel that we are very close to an agreement. This is probably the last leg — the last 100 metres, as sprinters would say. We are very close, but we have to exert the pressure necessary to ensure that we are able to cover these last 100 metres in a very effective but responsible way, with all parties sitting around the negotiating table. We must make the necessary sacrifices.

Malian public opinion understands that compromise and sacrifices are necessary and that solutions must be found to the problems affecting Malians, because what we face today is the renewed flare-up of threats on the ground. Even as we negotiate and move towards peace, hostile forces are trying to pull us in the opposite direction. That is why it is important that we be able to overcome this hurdle, so that the Government and the armed movements can join forces to fight those who are the real enemies today, that is, terrorist groups and drug traffickers, whose interests are interlinked.

I think that it is important to convey these positive messages, namely, that agreement is more than possible, but we have to continue to work actively. We must work because all of our efforts must be focused on this. If we miss this opportunity, that offered by the beginning of 2015, to achieve an agreement, I am afraid that the

situation might simply spin out of control and later we will not be able to regain that control. So the Council must bear in mind that it needs to focus on this process during this very critical phase.

One of the notable and relevant decisions of the Nouakchott summit and the G-5 Sahel was on the security situation in Libya. Libya is of concern not only to our heads of State but also to us in Mali and to the Sahel. The Council will recall that the Malian crisis is, after all, linked to the Libyan crisis, and, so long as a solution is not found to the Libyan crisis, all that we are doing in Mali and in the Sahel will continue to be at risk. So with respect to the Libyan crisis, the heads of State and Government of the Sahel welcomed the efforts undertaken by Algeria and the Special Representative of the United Nations to ensure that the necessary conditions are created to hold a dialogue among all Malian parties.

To preserve the unity, territorial integrity and stability of Libya and of the whole of the Sahelo-Saharan region, the heads of State and Government of the G-5 Sahel launched an appeal to the Security Council for it to set up, jointly with the African Union, an international force to neutralize the armed groups, help with national reconciliation and create stable institutions in Libya. Libya is of concern to us. Continuing efforts must be made in that respect, and we hope that the next African Union summit in Addis Ababa will provide the Heads of State with an opportunity to once again address this issue and to consider solutions thereto.

Allow me also to touch on the Ebola virus epidemic, which poses yet another threat to peace and security throughout the world. I would like here to pay tribute to the personal commitment of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in the fight against this scourge. We welcome the fact that above and beyond the reports he receives, he has travelled to the area, as he did on 20 December. He visited Mali to convey his solidarity and to witness at first hand the harm done by the epidemic in the countries affected.

We in my country mobilized fully to prevent the spread of the disease. As underscored in the report of the Secretary-General, through the efforts of the Government of Mali and the assistance of its partners, to which I pay tribute, we were able to stem the spread of the disease in our country. Indeed, since 16 December 2014 there have been no cases of Ebola in Mali. Of seven confirmed cases, five were fatal and two were cured. However, the threat remains. The Government

of the Republic of Mali therefore continues to advocate vigilance and the strict observance of prevention measures among the population.

By way of conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report, the members of the Security Council and the mediation team headed by Algeria for their support to Mali and their efforts to achieve a definitive and lasting peace in my country.

I should like also to thank all of the other countries that are not members of the Security Council or of the mediation team but that are friends and partners of Mali and that have always provided us with multiformatted support, often in a very understated way. I should like also to reiterate the congratulations of the Government of the Republic of Mali to Mr. Mongi Hamdi on his appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA and to assure him of our full cooperation so as to ensure the success of

his mission. We also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Mr. David Gressly and Mr. Arnauld Akodjénou, Deputy Special Representatives, and to General Kazura for the outstanding work carried out.

I wish also to thank MINUSMA, the troop-contributing countries and the Barkhane force for the outstanding work they have done in Mali in a very difficult and hostile environment.

Last but not least, I would like to pay tribute to our colleague Minister Bert Koenders, former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the outstanding work that he did at the head of MINUSMA.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.50 p.m.